

## Bible Study # 12 Exodus 7.14–25 02–20–2021

From 7:8 to 12:30 the narrative deals with the visitations of God's judgement on Egypt. Though the signs are often referred to as 'plagues', and while the biblical text refers to individual signs as 'plagues' (9:3, 14, 15; 11:1), yet collectively they are either called 'signs' (7:3; 8:23; 10:1) or 'wonders' (4:21; 7:3; 11:9, 10). Also, eleven signs were performed, as the incident with Moses' staff (7:6-13) should be included.

The signs were part of the events that set the pattern of redemption for all the rest of the Scriptures. The language of the New Testament, in describing the redemption purchased by Christ, echoes in many places the language of the book of Exodus (cf. Acts 2:22). Many of the details of the exodus seem to have typological significance.

The signs were judgments of God on Pharaoh and his people. They were directed against the people, the things that they depended upon for life and existence, and even against their gods (12:12). The events in connection with the signs constituted a polemic against the Egyptian gods. No indication is given of the time frame of these events. There is no suggestion in the text that they occurred in close chronological order.

Some have suggested the signs were just natural disasters that happened in a heightened form. While this position has been adopted by some this theory faces numerous objections. Nothing in the text suggests a natural phenomena was utilized by God to bring his judgment. There are no natural explanations for the signs before the elders by Moses (4:2-5; 4:8-9). The narrative in Exodus points to divine intervention with the signs.

Leaving aside the first demonstration of supernatural power (7:6-13), the following nine are arranged in threes. In the first three, warning is given to Pharaoh in the morning (7:15; 8:20; 9:13). While in the first and second of each three, the plague is announced beforehand, in the third it is not.

At the third sign the Egyptian magicians acknowledge the finger of God in the event (8:19), in the sixth they were unable to stand before Moses (9:11), and in the final one, the ninth, Pharaoh declares that he will not see Moses' face again (10:28).

There is also progression in intensity among the plagues. No distinction is made in the first two plagues between any of the inhabitants in Egypt. But in the next seven, it is only the Egyptians who are exposed to the consequences of the plagues. Moreover, the punishment inherent in the individual plagues became more severe.

The first three touched aspects of human comfort, the second three impinged on the maintenance of life, and the third group brought death. The signs must also be viewed in their connection with creation. Exodus 1–15 has strong affinity with the account of creation in Genesis 1–2 and also other parts of Genesis 1–11.

The early verses of Exodus make the connection explicit by alluding to the creation mandate (cf. Exod. 1:7 with Gen. 1:28). When the judgment of the signs occurs, creation goes into reverse. There is uncreation, or decreation. The work of creation in six days as related in Genesis 1 was attacked and chaos ensued. By the ninth sign, darkness again marks out the created world.

I encourage you to keep in mind this overview of the signs and plagues as we return to the study the narrative. Once again God informs Moses that Pharaoh will not listen and let the people of Israel go. Now the very next morning God has Moses go out and confront Pharaoh when he appears along the Nile.

Once again the message is to let God's people go out into the wilderness and worship. Apparently there is no waiting for a response from Pharaoh. God wants Pharaoh to know that he alone is YHWH. The full consequences of turning the water into blood are outlined. All the water in the river and in the pools of Egypt as well as their water storage vessels of wood or stone were filled with blood.

Moses and Aaron did as directed by the Lord in the sight of the pharaoh and his servants. The water turned to blood which killed the fish and the river stank and no one could drink it. However, the Egyptian magicians did the same thing by their secret arts. Thus Pharaoh's heart hardened and would not listen to YHWH.

The people of Egypt dug along the side of the Nile for fresh water because they could not drink the water of the Nile. We do not know how many days the bloody water lasted, but after 7 days, God was ready to show his divine and consuming power again.

Our next study will be Exodus 8:1–15.